

Thomas Jefferson Middle School Parent Handbook 2019-2020

Prepared by the Jefferson PTA

Welcome to Thomas Jefferson Middle School – Jefferson or TJ for short!

Having a child in middle school can be a bit overwhelming. To help, the TJ Parent Teacher Association (PTA) has put together this Parent Handbook to give you a brief overview of Jefferson and to try to answer some of the questions that many families have about the school. While the handbook is not all-inclusive, we hope that it will help answer some basic questions and guide you to other resources for more in-depth information. There is a great deal happening at the school at any given time; the resources in this handbook – especially the Communication section – will help you ensure that you and your student(s) don't miss any important information.

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TJ Basics

Principal: Ms. Keisha Boggan

School Hours: 7:50am–2:24pm (doors open at 7:40am)

Early Release School Hours: 7:50am–11:54am

Office Hours: 7am–4pm.

Main Office: 703-228-5900

Attendance Line: 703-228-5898, carla.bran@apsva.us

Registrar: 703-228-5908, ana.mejia@apsva.us

Address: 125 South Old Glebe Road, Arlington, VA 22204

If you are not fluent in English and need help with translation or interpretation:

At the top of the Jefferson website page, there is a link to Google translate (“translate” button) which will translate the information on the page into several different languages including Spanish, Amharic, Arabic, Mongolian and Bengali. APS provides interpreters for school events like Student Conferences. Staff in the TJ main office can help arrange interpreters. At TJ, Ms. Patricia Yurrita provides Spanish and French translation and interpretation. Contact her at patricia.yurrita@apsva.us or 703-228-5890

Communications

From School

Jefferson Website: You can find the answers to many questions as well as updates on upcoming events on the Jefferson School webpage: <https://jefferson.apsva.us>

School Calendar:

At the bottom of the Jefferson homepage you will find a calendar of upcoming events at both the school and APS level. It is a fairly comprehensive calendar of events at TJ as well as the APS and school board calendars. It does not include after school club meetings, ACT II schedules, or sports practices. Press the “view all” button to see a full month of events and scroll through the upcoming months. On the monthly calendar page, you can subscribe to the calendar via the +iCal and +Google links at the top right of the calendar.

Monthly Activities Calendar:

In the left-hand column of the Jefferson home page you will find a link to the Monthly Activities Calendar. This calendar has a detailed list of events happening at TJ during and after school including assemblies, field trips, club meetings, and ACT II. The second page of the calendar lists sports practices and games. The calendar is published on a monthly basis and each month is available a few days before the start of that month.

Morning Announcements

Students hear daily announcements during Teacher Advisory period (TA). Announcements include reminders about daily activities and upcoming events and whether it is an A or B day for 6th graders (more information in School Organization). Parents can see the daily announcements by clicking on the “morning announcements” link in the left-hand column of the Jefferson home page.

Robocalls

Principal Boggan periodically (once to twice a month) sends a recorded voice message about upcoming events to all parents and guardians who have a phone number on file with APS. The message is first in English, then in Spanish.

Peachjar

Every parent/guardian who has an email listed with APS receives weekly email flyers from Peachjar. Some apply to all APS families and others are specific to TJ families. Monthly activities calendars and flyers for PTA events are distributed through Peachjar. Access previous flyers through the link on the left hand side of the TJ homepage.

Academic Team Weekly Emails/Website Posts

Each academic team provides weekly email updates to the parents/guardians of students in their team regarding the content students are currently working on. The email may link to the team’s website page.

Jefferson Student Handbook

Each student receives a copy of the Student Handbook. The handbook contains a great deal of detailed information on many of the topics touched on here as well as many others and is an important resource for parents and students. Electronic copy: [Jefferson Student Handbook](#)

Twitter

The school's Twitter account is **@JeffersonIBMYP**. Many staff use Twitter to share photos and details about projects and activities. A list of TJ teacher/counselor/administrator Twitter handles is forthcoming.

From the PTA (Parent Teacher Association)

Jefferson BUZZ

This weekly email newsletter comes out on Mondays and shares upcoming events and news.

TJMS listserv

The TJMS PTA email list is for all members of the TJMS community. Most messages come from the PTA and are about upcoming events and volunteer needs, but parents may ask questions or share information about anything relevant to the TJMS community.

To subscribe, send a message to tjms-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

To post a message to the group, send to tjms@yahoogroups.com

Messages are moderated and may take a while to be approved and to appear on the listserv.

TJMS PTA Facebook page

The Facebook page for the TJMS PTA is <https://www.facebook.com/ThomasJeffersonMSPTA>

Go here to see live or archived video feeds of PTA meetings and to learn about other happenings. Note this is a public page, not a private group.

TJMS Garden Facebook page

Follow <https://www.facebook.com/TJGarden> to see what's growing, to learn about garden workdays, and to find out other ways to support outdoor learning at TJMS. Note this is a public page, not a private group.

Jefferson Parents Facebook group

There is a Facebook group created by some of the TJ Parents to talk about issues in a more private setting. The reach of this group is smaller than the listserv or PTA Facebook page, but can be useful for those who prefer to communicate via Facebook. This is a private group monitored by parents and requires permission.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/319234535448711/>

WhatsApp

To connect through WhatsApp, here is the link to the WhatsApp group:

<https://chat.whatsapp.com/H1d8thYLLLHBkax1c6nlwc>

PTA Student Directory

The Student Directory will be available electronically a few months after school begins. The directory contains students' names and the names, phone numbers and email addresses of their parents/guardians. It does not contain addresses. To be included in the directory, you must check "Yes" under Part 1 of the Release of Student Information Form in your first day packet on ParentVUE. The PTA uses the company A to Z Directories. Those who opted-in (checked "Yes") will receive an email invitation from A to Z to verify their information and access the directory.

Who to contact if...

Your child is sick or running late:

Call the attendance line: 703-228-5898 or email the attendance secretary, Ms. Carla Bran, at carla.bran@apsva.us

You have concerns about bullying, academic struggles, cheating, inappropriate screen use:

Contact your child's School Counselor. Each grade is assigned a school counselor. Counselors rotate each year with their assigned grade, so your child will have the same counselor for all three years. Assignments for 2018:

6th Grade - Ms. Jasmine Burton, jasmine.burton@apsva.us, 703-228-5864

7th Grade - Ms. Amelia Black, amelia.black@apsva.us, 703-228-5897

8th Grade - Ms. Susan Russo, susan.russo@apsva.us, 703-228-8779

EL Counselor - Ms. Ana Rodriguez, ana.rodriguez2@apsva.us, 703-228-5871

You need help with food, clothing, or housing:

TJ has many resources to help families in need. Contact the TJ School Social Worker, Ms. Elizabeth Brady, for assistance: elizabeth.brady@apsva.us, 703-228-5867

You have concerns regarding bus transportation:

Students who live more than 1.5 miles from TJ are eligible for bus transportation. In the last week of August, eligible students will receive a letter that includes their bus route, bus stop, and pickup time. If you have questions or problems with the bus, contact the APS Transportation Call Center: 703-228-8670 (6am–6pm weekdays) or <https://www.apsva.us/transportation-services>

You have questions about the yearbook:

The TJ Yearbook is produced by the school (not the PTA). Information on how to buy a yearbook is put out through announcements and the school website. For questions, contact Jeffrey Anderson.

You need to contact a staff member:

Search the TJ Staff Email Directory: <https://jefferson.apsva.us/staff-directory>

School Organization

Grade Level Teams

Each student is assigned to an academic team and will take most of their classes from teachers within that team. This creates smaller communities within the school. Teams also have team-building activities and field trips with their teams. Occasionally a whole grade level will participate in the same activity together. Teams may ask for funds at the beginning of the year to go toward team activities.

6th Grade Teams: Owls, Dolphins, Stingrays

7th Grade Teams: Penguins, Monarchs, Dragons

8th Grade Teams: Eagles, Gators, Phoenix

Counselors and Assistant Principals:

The School Counselors and Assistant Principals (AP) rotate with their assigned grade level so your child will have the same Counselor and AP for all three years.

2019-20 Grade-level counselors and administrators

6th Grade

Counselor: Ms. Jasmine Burton, jasmine.burton@apsva.us, 703-228-5864

AP: Mr. Vincent Jarosz, vincent.jarosz@apsva.us, 703-228-8768

7th Grade

Counselor: Ms. Amelia Black, amelia.black@apsva.us, 703-228-5897

AP: Ms. Diana Jordan, diana.jordan@apsva.us, 703-228-8768

8th Grade

Counselor: Ms. Susan Russo, susan.russo@apsva.us, 703-228-8779

AP: Mr. Robert Hanson, robert.hanson@apsva.us, 703-228-8768

English Learners (formerly HILT)

Counselor: Ms. Ana Rodriguez, ana.rodriguez2@apsva.us, 703-228-5871

Program Counselor

Counselor: Dr. Tiffini Woody-Pope, tiffini.woodypoppe@apsva.us, 703-228-5899

Additional Contacts:

Principal: Ms. Keisha Boggan, keisha.boggan@apsva.us, 703-228-5900

Director of Counseling: Ms. Susan Holland, susan.holland@apsva.us, 703-228-5908

School Social Worker: Ms. Elizabeth Brady, elizabeth.brady@apsva.us, 703-228-5867

School Psychologist: Ms. Tanya Moncrieffe-Heath, tanya.moncrieffeheat@apsva.us

Equity and Excellence Coordinator: Ms. Stephanie Smith, stephanie.smith@apsva.us

School Resource Officer (SRO): CPL Garnell Stewart, garnell.stewart@apsva.us

School Community Liaison: Ms. Patricia Yurrita, patricia.yurrita@apsva.us, 703-228-5890

Clinic: 703-228-5893

Teacher/Advisor Program (TA)

Each student is assigned to a TA teacher. Students go to TA for a brief period (10 minutes) at the beginning of every day for most of the year. During the first weeks of school, before Yellow Jacket Period (see below) starts, TA periods are longer. During TA, students listen to morning announcements and receive instruction in notebook organization, time management, productive study habits, note-taking, following directions, and test-taking. Students receive their progress reports and report cards through TA. Your child's TA teacher may or may not be one of his/her regular teachers. If you have questions about your child's classes or team, contact your child's TA first for information.

Office of English Learners (formerly ESOL/HILT)

The English Learners program serves students from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds. The EL Program works to ensure that English learners (ELs) attain English proficiency in order to develop high levels of academic achievement. Based on an assessment by the Language Services and Registration Center (LSRC), students are placed in one of the following programs.

- EL1 (Level 1) for students with beginning English proficiency, meets 4-5 periods
- EL2 (Level 2) for students with intermediate English proficiency, meets 3-4 periods
- EL3 / EL4 (Level 3/4) for students with advanced English proficiency, meets 2-3 periods
- EL Resource (Levels 1-4) for students who additionally receive Special Education services, EL instruction is provided through the student's Special Education classes
- EL students are also assigned to a grade level team

EL team: <https://jefferson.apsva.us/hilt-team/>

Special Education

TJ offers a continuum of Special Education services and placements. To the greatest extent possible and in accordance with the requirements for Least Restrictive Environment (LRE), students with disabilities (SWD) are educated with their non-disabled peers. However, for students who need more specialized instruction, SWD can be educated in any combination of inclusion, co-taught, or self-contained classroom settings. IEP (Individualized Education Program) meetings take place weekly on Thursdays. For more information, contact: Ms. Susan Holland, Director of Counseling Services, or visit: <https://jefferson.apsva.us/special-education-programs/>

Yellow Jacket Period (YJP)

YJP is a 30-minute period that takes place after TA and is designed to provide extra help to students in a particular subject area, to offer students a chance to explore a new area or skill, or to let students participate in a more in-depth project. Students change YJP classes once or twice a quarter. Teachers determine which YJP students will be assigned to, but students may talk to their TA to request placement in an area of need or interest. The first YJP starts in late September.

Jefferson Garden

The TJ Community garden (<https://jefferson.apsva.us/pta/the-jefferson-garden/>) functions as an outdoor learning classroom and a community service opportunity. In the summer, it's a neighborhood community hub and a Plot Against Hunger for the Arlington Food Assistance Center. If your middle schooler is interested in working outdoors for their community service work at TJ, invite them to come to the garden on Friday afternoons 2:30-4pm (listen for a mention of garden days on morning announcements). It's also a great opportunity for 8th grade community service projects. Parents are invited to volunteer on Friday afternoons or at other times. Enid Dunbar is the staff sponsor for the garden, and Reidy Brown is the PTA sponsor. Questions? Email tjmsoutside@gmail.com or follow on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/TJGarden/>.

6th Grade A and B Days

Students in 6th grade have the same schedule in the morning through 6th period every day. In the afternoon, during 7th and 8th periods, they have one set of electives on A days and the other two electives on B days. Days alternate such that one week may have A days on Monday, Wednesday, Friday and the following week A days are on Tuesday/Thursday.

IB Programme and Service Component

Service to the community is a critical part of the International Baccalaureate (IB) Middle Years Curriculum. Click here for more on service requirements: <http://jefferson.apsva.us/wp-content/uploads/sites/22/2017/09/Service-Learning-and-Community-Project-info-webpage-2017-2.pdf>

- 6th and 7th grade students are expected to perform regular community service as part of the IB Programme and to reflect on that service. They will be given information on the expectations for service and how it will be tracked in the beginning of the school year.
- All 8th grade students will plan and implement a Capstone service project, their Community Project. Students will work with the IB Coordinator to determine the nature and scope of the project.

Direct questions about IB to IB Programme Coordinator, Mr. Kip Malinoski, 703-228-5911, kip.malinoski@apsva.us. He will provide an overview of the service program during one of the monthly PTA Meetings.

Math Pathways

The math pathways were revised for all Virginia middle schools in 2018. The school counselors recommend which pathway each student should take. Letters of recommendation for your child's level will be sent home before school begins. If you don't agree with the pathway recommended for your child or have questions, contact your child's counselor. The new pathways are described here: https://www.apsva.us/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Pathways_Recommendation-Process-FINAL-SY20-1.pdf

Gifted Services

Gifted Services Information Night in October will provide in-depth information on how services are provided at TJ. Students identified as gifted in a subject area are grouped together within the regular classrooms. The Resource Teacher for the Gifted (RTG) works with the classroom teachers to provide differentiated instruction for gifted learners. For more information, contact the RTG, Ms. Megan Detweiler, megan.detweiler@apsva.us

Act II Classes

Act II is a graded semester class that is included in a student's schedule as well as on their report card. The classes meet after school on Tuesday and/or Thursday from 2:30-4pm. Students are expected to attend all sessions. Classes are offered in Art, Drama, Chorus, and Technology. Information on which classes are offered each semester will be available on the homepage of the TJ website. Students will have the opportunity to sign up for fall Act II classes a few weeks after the semester has begun by turning in a form to their school counselor. These forms must be signed by the parent/guardian.

SOLs

Students take the following Standards of Learning (SOL) tests in the Spring. Scores are mailed to families in August.

6th Grade: Reading, Math

7th Grade: Reading, Math, Civics & Economics

8th Grade: Reading, Math, Science, Writing

Homework and Homework Assistance

Homework varies by teacher and team. Study Hall is offered from 2:30-3:30pm on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays in the TJMS library. Study Hall is a quiet classroom space for students to work, staffed by teachers who can answer questions or support students in completing homework. Students can attend on an as-needed basis.

High School Credits

A few classes at TJ (including some higher math and language classes) receive high school credit. The credit and grade will appear on your student's high school transcript and be part of his/her GPA (unless you request otherwise).

Physical Education (P.E.)

All students take P.E./Health. P.E. uniforms (shorts and t-shirt) are available for purchase at the beginning of the year and must be worn for students to receive credit for participation. No uniforms are required during the health units.

Breakfast

The cafeteria will open at 7:20am for students who would like to purchase breakfast and eat before school begins. Staff supervision is provided.

Lunch

Each grade level has a separate lunch period. After school has been in session for a few weeks, students will have the option to go outside for part of their lunch period to eat and/or play sports. Staff supervision is provided.

Transportation

With the completed construction of Alice West Fleet Elementary next door, TJMS will reopen the main front door entrance as well as the individual grade level entrances. There is a new bus lane that will serve as the drop-off and pick-up points near the main entrance. In addition, there is a new parent/guardian drop-off and pick-up lane adjacent to Alice West Fleet on S. Old Glebe Road. Students will use the walkways from bus and parent drop-off and pick-up to access their grade level entrances. Bike riders can use the bicycle racks located near the main front entrance to secure bikes. Upon arrival, students will enter the school building according to their grade. At dismissal, students will exit through their appropriate grade level doors.

6th Grade - Door 17

7th Grade - Door 16

8th Grade - Door 15

More information on student arrival/dismissal procedures can be found at

http://jefferson.apsva.us/wp-content/uploads/sites/22/2016/08/2019-08-14_-TJMS_DO-and-PU-procedures_FINAL-submittal.pdf

How to know how your child is doing in school

ParentVUE (<https://vue.apsva.us/>)

Parentvue is an online tool that provides parents/guardians with access to the latest information about your child's attendance and classwork. Families can view class assignments, scores, report card grades, and course history with ParentVUE. This is an extremely helpful way to regularly check to see how your child is doing. The Grade Book page allows you to see if your child is missing homework assignments or tests before it is too late to make them up. Students have access to the same information through their StudentVue accounts.

If you do not have an existing ParentVue account, you should receive a letter with a Parent Account Activation Code from TJ. If you never received the code, you can get a new one from the the school registrar Ana Mejia: 703-228-5908, ana.mejia@apsva.us. Once you have the activation code, instructions for getting your account set up can be found at

<https://www.apsva.us/post/how-do-i-activate-my-parentvue-account/>

Need Help? Jefferson staff will also hold several information sessions (many in languages other than English) to help families set up their accounts.

Basic Guide to Navigating ParentVUE:

<http://jefferson.apsva.us/wp-content/uploads/sites/22/2016/09/ParentVUE-Information-Lucy-Nguyens-Capstone-Community-Service-Project.pdf>

Student-Led Conferences

Conferences are held twice a year, once in the fall and once in the spring. Parents/guardians meet with their child and their child's TA teacher. The conferences are student led, meaning that the student has prepared information to present to her parents/guardians. The TA will help guide the student through his/her presentation. **In 2019-2020, the dates are October 25 and March 6.**

How to sign up

Instructions will be sent out via email on how to electronically schedule your 20-minute conference. To schedule meetings with teachers other than your child's TA, contact the teacher directly. If you need additional assistance, contact your child's counselor.

Interpretation

APS will provide an interpreter for the conference, if needed. You can request an interpreter when you schedule your conference appointment.

Technology

iPads

Every student receives a personal iPad and charger cord. Sixth- and seventh-grade students keep the iPad during the summers and return it to the school at the end of 8th grade. Students use these devices all the time in their classes, do much of their homework on them, and often use them to take tests. Students are expected to charge their iPads at home and bring them to school every day. They will receive a list of guidelines for appropriate use of their iPads and the consequences for misuse. Currently, students are allowed to use their iPads during a portion of their lunch period. For some suggestions on how to manage iPad use at home, see <https://jefferson.apsva.us/technology-resources/digital-learning-initiative-updates/technical-support-for-parents>

Personal phones

Students may bring personal phones to school but are *not allowed to use them during school hours* (including lunch period).

APS Acceptable Use Policy

The APS policy on acceptable use of devices is here:

<https://www.apsva.us/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/20-2.210-acceptable-use-networked-info-resources-Policy.pdf>

After School Activities

Act II Classes - See "School Organization" above

Clubs

TJ offers a great variety of optional afterschool clubs. These include clubs focused on activities (such as chess, and art), service, academic interests, identity and issues, music, and drama. Most meet once a week from 2:30-3:30pm, but some meet more frequently. Clubs are a great way for students to meet others that share their interests or to learn new things. Clubs are listed in the After the Bell booklet, available on the TJ website under the "Activities" tab. A few hard copies will be available at Back to School Night. Sample 2018-29 booklet: <http://jefferson.apsva.us/wp-content/uploads/sites/22/2018/09/AfterTheBell2018.pdf>

Music & Drama

Band, Orchestra, and Chorus occasionally schedule afterschool rehearsals. Students will receive a schedule from their teacher with all rehearsal dates. Parents with children in the music program will also be invited to sign up for the Charms program, an online resource with a calendar and ways to sign up to volunteer. There are also optional music programs that meet weekly after school such as jazz band and advanced chamber music.

Drama productions are held twice a year (fall play and winter/spring musical) and have regular rehearsals after school. Students audition for these productions. Typically, there are more roles open for the spring production than the fall production.

Sports Choice

Sports Choice is a voluntary after-school intramural program that meets Monday-Thursday. Students play basketball, volleyball, flag football, soccer and other sports in a non-competitive environment. No registration is needed; students just drop in to the gym after school before 2:35pm.

Late Buses

Late buses depart at 4:15pm. Only students who stay after school under Jefferson staff supervision for clubs, tutoring, study hall, sports and other school related activities may ride the late bus. Late buses stop at almost every regular bus stop but combine multiple bus routes so will not be identical to the student's regular bus assignment.

Check-In: Extended Day

Open from 2:30 - 6:00 pm Monday - Friday (September - June); **Fee-based program**

The Check-In program is Extended Day's after school program for middle school students. The Check-In program provides students with a structured, supervised environment that allows them to participate in a variety of Check-In activities and extracurricular activities at TJ. Students who are enrolled in Check-in must sign-in at Check-in before they go to a school activity. After the activity they must return to the Check-in program.

Check-in students, with parent permission, are also able to sign themselves out and leave the school campus.

Once a child has signed out for the day, they cannot return to the Check-in program.

To register: <https://www.apsva.us/extended-day/registration/>

Jefferson Recreation Center Teen Program

Open from 2:30-6pm Monday - Friday (September - June) **Free program**

This is a free after school program for teens to have fun, make new friends, and develop skills. Programs can include music, dance, games, cooking, art, sport games, and activities chosen by teen participants. Teens are expected to participate in activities. To register, download the registration form and drop it off in person or email to OFT@arlingtonva.us. Questions? Contact 703-228-7780.

English: <https://parks.arlingtonva.us/wp-content/uploads/sites/17/2013/11/Official-Teen-Registration-form.pdf>

Spanish: <https://parks.arlingtonva.us/wp-content/uploads/sites/17/2017/03/TeenRegistrationform-Spanish.pdf>

Students who attend other school-sponsored activities after school can enter the Rec Program at 3:30pm with a pass from a teacher or staff member. At 4:15pm, Rec. Center Teen Program late bus riders report to the cafeteria (must have stamp on hand). With parent permission, students can check themselves out but cannot return to the center after they have checked out.

Sports

The following sports are offered at TJ. Sports marked with * are no-cut sports; all students may participate.

Fall: Girls and Boys Tennis, Girls Soccer, Boys Soccer, Boys Ultimate Frisbee*, Girls Ultimate Frisbee*, Cheerleading (tryouts required for Winter)

Winter: Girls Basketball, Boys Basketball, Wrestling*

Spring: Swimming*, Diving*, Track*

Dates

Tryouts and Game dates will be provided at the beginning of the year through the Monthly Activities Calendar and on the TJ website under the “Activities” tab.

Practice

Most sports have daily practice from 2:30-4pm The swim team and diving team practice at the Washington-Lee pool. Coaches will disseminate schedules. Students eligible for busing can take a late bus home after practice. The late buses leave TJ at 4:15pm

Banquet

A sports banquet is held at the end of each season (Fall, Winter, Spring) to recognize athletes. It is a potluck dinner and athletes and family are invited to attend.

Medical forms

All participants of non-club teams must submit a doctor signed VHSL physical form to Mr. Siegel before attending tryouts or practices. Any physical dated past May 1 will be good through the end of the NEXT school year. Your child can pick up a sports packet from Mr. Seigel or access it here:

<http://jefferson.apsva.us/wp-content/uploads/sites/22/2017/08/2018sportspacket.pdf>

8th Grade Students

8th grade students can participate in sports at their “home” high school IF the sport is not offered at the middle school level. Any eighth grader who intends to play a sport at the high school level must also have sports injury insurance or medical insurance. APS offers School Accident Insurance for those students who do not have private insurance. See Mr. Seigel for details and forms.

Transportation to matches

Transportation is provided by APS to all matches. Transportation home to athletes' bus stops will be provided after matches end. Matches typically begin at 3:15.

Questions? Contact Mr. Jeremy Siegel at (703) 228–5904 or jeremy.siegel@apsva.us

Important Events

Harvest Festival - October 18

The Fall Harvest Festival is a major community event. It takes place outside the main entrance on a Friday evening in October and brings together the whole TJ community including students, their families, neighbors, and TJ staff. Participants can explore the TJ garden and listen to the chorus perform while enjoying pizza and seasonal treats. Kids have fun watching a movie outside on hay bales. Pumpkins are raffled off at the end of the evening. The event is free with the option to buy pizza by the slice.

Silent Auction - November

The Silent Auction is the PTA's biggest fundraiser of the year. In years past, we have gotten a wide variety of items ranging from gift cards, to local business donations, to vacations. This year we will be doing it online.

International Night - April

International Night takes place on a Friday evening in April in the TJ gym. The event is for the whole family and is a fantastic celebration of the international flavor of our IB community. Each family brings a dish to share from their cultural background (or just one they love and would like to share). There are student performances, a student fashion show of clothing from around the world, an art display, professional entertainment (usually music or dance), face painting, henna tattoos, and more. Throughout the evening, the PTA holds a basket raffle fundraiser. The baskets are a joint effort between TJ families and the PTA. Families donate items based on a theme chosen by the TAs (movie night, spa day, cooking, etc.). The PTA solicits additional donations from local businesses and combines all the items to create beautiful baskets. Raffle tickets are sold during the event.

Transitioning to middle school: supporting your child

- Encourage your child to get involved in areas that interest them and to try new things. After school activities are a good way to meet other students with shared interests.
- Set technology guidelines and monitor your child's use.
- Make sure your student gets enough sleep, exercises, and eats a healthy diet.
- Check ParentVue regularly to identify academic problems before they go too far. Encourage your child to check StudentVue regularly as well.
- Help your child find and develop ways to cope with stress (art, yoga, sports, listening to music, meditation, gardening).
- Help your child develop organizational skills. Students will work on learning these skills at TJ, but it will help them if you work on it at home as well.
- Help them learn to problem solve, self-advocate and develop independence. Encourage your child to talk directly to his teachers if he has questions or problems with assignments. Don't jump in right away to fix it or to get the answer. Help him/her brainstorm/roll play interactions with adults or peers.
- Contact your child's School Counselor if you have questions about how to handle any specific issues or concerns (screen use, bullying, drug use).

Jefferson Parent Teacher Association (PTA)

The PTA is a national volunteer organization with local branches at many schools. Membership is open to all parents/guardians and staff. At TJ, the PTA's goals are to:

- Serve as a two-way information link between families and the school administration.
- Help support an excellent learning environment for our students through mini-grants to teachers, recognition of honors students.
- Advocate for students and families.
- Build a sense of community by supporting events like Harvest Night, International Night, and restaurant nights.
- Provide support and appreciation for our wonderful teaching staff through teacher breakfasts, grants for educational opportunities, etc.
- Encourage outdoor learning and community service through our garden.
- Inform the TJ community on topics of interest such as the 1:1 device policy, school boundary issues, drug use awareness, gifted program.

Join the PTA

Membership in the PTA helps parents/guardians engage in their student's education, meet other parents, teachers and staff in the TJ community, and support the PTA's goals. Join online at <https://jefferson.apsva.us/pta/> or complete a membership form and submit it with payment (check made out to TJMS PTA) to the PTA mailbox in the main office. The membership fee is \$15/family per year.

Monthly Meetings

For 2019-20, monthly meetings will generally occur on the **third Tuesday of the month**. They take place **7:15-8:15pm** in the TJMS Library. Whenever possible, the meetings will be shared via Facebook Live from the TJMS PTA Facebook page. Live feeds are available for viewing at a later date. All PTA meetings offer simultaneous translation in Spanish. The first PTA meeting of the year takes place the hour before Back-to-School Night. For 2019-20, that will be on Thursday, **September 19 at 6pm**.

Support the PTA

Donations: You can make a donation when you complete your membership form, or at any time. Make donations by check (made out to "TJMS PTA") and leave them in the PTA box in the main office or by credit card through our Square account <https://squareup.com/market/thomas-jefferson-middle-school-pta>

Amazon Smile:

Begin your shopping on Amazon <https://smile.amazon.com/ch/54-1494367>. Jefferson gets money for every purchase made. To support TJ, bookmark this page and always start shopping from here.

Grocery Stores: Link your loyalty card to TJ

Giant Bonus Card: Register (Code 02007) at <http://giantfood.com/savings-and-rewards/rewards-program/aplus>

Harris-Teeter Card: Register (Code 3905) at <https://www.harristeeter.com/together-in-education>

Box Tops Program: Collect Box Tops and drop them off in the TJ main office

Fundraising

The PTA holds several fundraising events during the year to support the goals above. These events may include restaurant nights, a no-fuss fundraiser, the Used Book Fair, International Night Basket Raffle, and an online Silent Auction.

Volunteer

We have many opportunities to volunteer from chairing a committee to baking cookies for teacher appreciation or helping in the Jefferson garden. Please complete the volunteer interest portion of the PTA Membership Form, or e-mail the PTA President to share how you can help! You can also respond to requests that will be sent out in the weekly BUZZ and/or via the listserv.

2019-20 TJ PTA Officers

President, David Priddy, president@tjmspta.org

Secretary, Jeanette McComis, jsmccomis@aol.com

VP Outdoor Learning, Reidy Brown, tjmsoutside@gmail.com

Treasurer: Maggie Hershey, mhershey28@gmail.com
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